

The Hampden-Sydney Tiger

March 16, 2023

“The Hampden-Sydney student will behave as a gentleman at all times and in all places.”

Issue CIII.3

STUDENT SENATE PASSES RESOLUTION ON DR. ROB IRONS RESIGNATION, DRAWS HISTORIC CROWD



Photo courtesy of Richard Jones '25

RICHARD JONES '25
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

On Tuesday, February 28, Hampden-Sydney College witnessed the largest student turnout at a Senate meeting in recent memory. With the Senate set to vote on a resolution concerning the resignation of Dr. Robert Irons '00, over 90 students crammed into Brown 208, with many more standing

outside the doors. This resolution, which had amassed in about two days the signatures of over 430 students, which was more than half of the Student Body, is reprinted in full on page 2. According to Senator Daniel Marsden '23, the author of the resolution, the main purpose of the resolution is to “demand an explanation from the President of the College, Dean of the

Faculty, and Chair of the Classics Department for their unacceptable behavior that led to this resignation, preferably in the form of a public town hall,” but the power of the resolution, Marsden believes, is that it will be sent to the Board of Trustees. Marsden also stressed that the resolution was written with neither the consent nor the knowledge of Dr. Irons and passed without his

influence. Given the sheer number of students interested in the resolution, Marsden further argued that “it would be wise for them [the administration]” to hold a town hall to “maintain a cordial relationship with the Student Body.”

Although some concern was raised regarding how much the administration could actually disclose to the Student Body

Continue reading on page 2

NEW STUDENT EXECUTIVES ELECTED, SWORN IN

DRAKE KALINOWSKI '23
NEWS EDITOR

For the past few weeks, the student body of Hampden-Sydney have conducted their yearly elections to various different positions within the student government. Students from all grade levels participated in the election of both executive and general positions within student government, including positions in the Student Court, Senate, College Activities Council (CAC), and the wider student body. Debates were held for the executive positions of Student Body President, Student Court Chairman, Secretary-Treasurer, and CAC Chairman, and were moderated by Union-Philanthropic Literary Society (UPLS) President and Editor-in-Chief of *The Tiger* Daniel Nivens '24.

Candidates were asked a series of questions regarding a variety of topics, from college policy, spending, the honor system, and other topics relevant to the student body that would allow the voters to make a better informed decision on each of the varying positions. The candidates were allowed to respond to general questions from the audience as time allowed, as well as discuss answers from other candidates.

In a notable difference between most debates seen in the modern American political realm, the debates were short, covered the topic of discussion, and most importantly of all, were extremely civil in nature.

The debates were extremely well attended, with many brothers of The College journeying to the fourth floor of Bortz Library to witness the debate, ask questions, and support their favorite candidates for the various positions.

This election also marked an important milestone in the history of The College, with the executive election having a turnout

of 68.65%, a record for executive position voting. To win the position, a student needed a plurality, not a majority, of votes. The percentage breakdowns by position can be found below:

Student Body President:
Tommy Bishop
(27.53%)

Student Court Chairman:
Greyson Hurley
(51.69%)

Secretary-Treasurer:
Josh McCoy
(44.05%)

College Activities Council Chairman:
William Harrison
(47.96%)

Additionally, the freshmen Student Court election successfully ensured the place of three underclassmen to the court, with Owen Williams, Banks Mullen, and Cooper Daniels joining one of the strongest pillars of life here at Hampden-Sydney. Only freshmen are allowed to vote in these elections, which allows the newest class of Tigers to truly gain representation in the student senate.

The Sophomore class also held a special election regarding a vacancy on the court which was ultimately filled by Sam Detrick. Both of these elections were conducted via general elections in order to narrow the field in accordance with guidelines found in *The Key*, and the final candidates were then chosen from a follow-on election.

Throughout these many different elections, the candidates conducted themselves as examples of what it means to be a good man and a good citizen, accepting defeat with grace and victory with humility. These positions, and the process which allocates our brothers to them, is a storied part of Hampden-Sydney and one that ultimately could not exist without the participation of the student body in the unique atmosphere created here at Hampden-Sydney College.

FEATURE: INSIDE THE RPE

DANIEL MARSDEN '23
STAFF WRITER

The Rhetoric Proficiency Exam (RPE) has been a staple of the Hampden-Sydney curriculum since 1978. The Rhetoric Program was kind enough to allow some Tiger staff writers, including this humble author, to participate in annual RPE Training Workshop. Associate Director of Rhetoric Dr. Shawn Schooling, who administered the workshop, explained that “it is important to have people across campus involved” in the RPE. The purpose of the workshop is to establish and communicate the community standard for grading to new faculty and staff who volunteer to grade the exam. The RPE is a three-hour essay exam which tests a student’s ability to invent a reasonable and thoughtful thesis “on a subject not

foreign to the student’s experience” (Faculty Resolution, 1978). This subject and subsequent prompts come from articles supplied to the students. Past articles have covered topics like the conservation of Civil War battlefields and the usefulness of the hero’s journey in self-reflection. Students do not know the prompts or article prior to the exam. The RPE is administered to most students in the October and March, but there is typically an opportunity for seniors to take the RPE in January. The next opportunity to take the RPE is on March 21st. Students are able to take the exam in their fourth semester at the college. There are special rules for transfer students. The student should develop a thesis and “construct a logical and well-supported argument on that thesis”(RPE). The essays are judged

holistically. Metrics include “the quality and clarity of the thesis, the development of the idea, and the accuracy and grace of the language used to express the idea”(RPE). Dr. Schooling explained that “we have to evaluate the essay in front of us. We’re looking for proficiency in the writer.” Isn’t the “grace of the language” too vague? In short, it really isn’t. Specifically, once a student has completed his RPE, it is sent to two graders. The graders do not know who the other grader or the student are. Graders assign each essay a number on the six-point scale. If the combined that both graders return add up to seven. For example, if the first grader assigns a four and the second assigns a three, the combined score is a seven, and the student passed the RPE. However, the graders do not always agree. If the graders

return scores more than a point apart, the essay goes to a third reader for arbitration. The third grader examines the essay and assigns it a weighted number. For example, the third grader may assign an essay 3+, 3-, or simply a three. Dr. Schooling put it best when he said, “if it goes to arbitration, the truth will come out.” All of this grading may seem complicated, but the system is designed to produce the best outcomes in accordance with the community standard.

The RPE is not something that students should fear. Dr. Schooling explains that “if you take your position and argue it well, you’re probably going to be fine.” There are myriad opportunities for students to retake the RPE if they fail, but if you follow the tips and tricks laid out in this edition of *The Tiger* on page 4, it shouldn’t come to that.

PAGE TWO

The Hampden-Sydney Tiger

Founded 31 January 1920

by J. B. Wall '19

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Daniel Nivens '24

Associate Editor

Richard Jones '25

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Drake Kalinowski '23

Opinion Editor

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Life Editor

George Langhammer '24

Sports Editor

Daniel Stachowski '25

Copy Editor

David Crego '23

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Samuel Robelen '23

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Adam Brazil '24

Colton Chapman '24

Nick Rubino '25

Ben Jia '25

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The Hampden-Sydney Tiger is a student newspaper serving the community of Hampden-Sydney and operating independently of the College. The Tiger is printed biweekly by The Farmville Herald.

The views expressed in the Hampden-Sydney Tiger are those of their authors and do not reflect the official stance of The Tiger.

We accept submissions in the form of letters or guest columns. Brevity is encouraged. Interested writers, cartoonists, and photographers can send us an e-mail at news@hsc.edu.

SENATE
RESOLUTION,
CONT'D

about Dr. Irons' resignation, Senator Dominic Pastore '23 said that the Student Body needs to "put the pressure" on the administration regardless of the constraints. Mr. Connor Eickelman '24, one of the primary canvassers for signatures for the petition, stated that doing so made him "more proud than ever to go to Hampden-Sydney" and that the sheer number of signatures in support of the resolution "shows how beloved Dr. Irons was" by the Hampden-Sydney community. Mr. Evan Old '26, who also helped canvas for signatures, said that he would "re-canvas the entire school" if need be. Mr. Eickelman was "look[ing] forward to hearing the response of alumni that were part of the many campus organizations that [Dr. Irons] was a part of, including Alpha Chi Sigma and UPLS."

The sentiments of the Student Body are best summarized by a quote from former Student Senate Chairman Moore: "I was promised a brotherhood here. We all were. The College's

sacrosanct duty is to 'form good men and good citizens.' In other words, the school's mission is to foster a brotherhood of virtue. The school failed in this mission. Dr. Irons is our brother. The school didn't care. If one brother is mistreated, then we all can be. Our brotherhood must stand together. Be Dr. Irons' brother; be your brother's keeper!"

Director of Communications Gordon Neal '09 has thus far only released the following statement on behalf of the College: "Given the confidential nature of personnel matters and out of respect for Dr. Irons' privacy, the College will not be commenting on this matter other than to say that we were saddened by Dr. Irons' decision to resign from the College and disappointed that this decision was made in the middle of the spring semester. We are grateful for his years of service to his alma mater and our students, and we wish him only the best as he begins the next chapter of his professional life."

RESOLUTION ON THE
RESIGNATION OF
DR. ROBERT PRICE IRONS III '00

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
ON FEBRUARY 28, 2023



SIGNED BY OVER 430
CURRENT STUDENTS

Whereas *The Key* grants the Student Senate the power "to investigate matters affecting the welfare of the student body" and to "transacts all student body business"(*The Key* 15, 10);

Whereas Dr. Robert Price Irons III '00 resigned from his tenured position as Associate Professor of Classics under sustained and supreme distress from his colleagues and administrative leadership;

Whereas Dr. Robert Price Iron's III '00 departure will negatively impact the quality of education and campus life, with special regard to his involvement in multiple student organizations;

Whereas the Student Senate seeks to exercise all "powers [as] delegated to it by the faculty and trustees" in accordance with the mission of the college (*The Key* 10);

Resolved, that the Student Senate and those students and faculty here assembled

- commend Dr. Robert Price Irons III '00 is for his extensive service to the Hampden-Sydney College and wish him the best in all future endeavors;
- demand an explanation from the President of the College, Dean of the Faculty, and Chair of the Classics Department for their unacceptable behavior that led to this resignation, preferably in the form of a public town hall;
- lament the loss of yet another alumnus from the faculty and staff of the college following the departures of Dr. Ryan Pemberton '00, Berkeley Leonard '07, Jason Ferguson '96, and Dr. Geoffrey Lea '04;
- inform the Board of Trustees of the dissatisfaction of the study body and ineptitude of the administration; and
- promulgate the contents of the above resolution to the student body via email and publication in the next issue of *The Tiger*.

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE RESOLUTION WAS PUBLISHED IN FULL AT THE REQUEST OF THE STUDENT SENATE, PER SECTION 5.

DEI CANDIDATE TOURS CAMPUS, HOSTS TALK

MATTHEW MISCIKOWSKI '26
STAFF WRITER

Hampden-Sydney recently hosted its first candidate to fill the vacant Director of Culture and Inclusion position. The candidate, Dr. Desiree Washington, spent the day touring the campus, familiarizing herself with H-SC's dynamics and speaking with students and faculty. She then gave a presentation entitled "Being and Belonging -- Approaches to Building a More Inclusive Campus Culture in Support of the College's Mission," during which she detailed her assessment of H-SC and her plans to synergize the implementation of her strategies with the college's mission to "form good men and good citizens in an atmosphere of sound learning." Throughout her presentation, Dr. Washington stressed the importance of professors connecting with and providing for students and the need for more cooperation between all levels at the college.

The first step in Dr. Washington's plan is an internal shift. First, the college must carry out thorough introspection to solidly define its

identity. Then, the college must make continuous, strategic changes while assessing external factors in relation to its identity. During her presentation, Dr. Washington emphasized that development would be ongoing, rather than focusing on a specific goal by a specific time. She also heavily emphasized professors' roles in facilitating this development. Dr. Washington suggested that professors "step down from their high horses" to better serve the students in numerous capacities, including those that fall outside of the professors' titles. She

further elaborated on this "inclusive interactive pedagogy" by suggesting that professors create alternatives to assigned readings (e.g., TikTok-length videos) to provide students with varying resources to better fit the students' varying ideal methods of learning. In terms of students, Dr. Washington suggested that more proactive resources should be provided and that these resources should be made available to everyone. She proposed a new program called the "Tiger Pact," which would incentivize students' prioritization of academics by offering to have the college pay for

students' last semester if they sufficiently maintain their academics. Dr. Washington also suggested that textbooks for core-required classes should be provided to students free of charge and that advisors should strive to work with students in order to produce a "roadmap" for them in their first semester that would lay the path toward achieving the students' majors and goals. After being prompted by an audience member's question, Dr. Washington added that H-SC should do its best to include the area's rich civil rights history in the college's identity.

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NEWS

CLUB SPOTLIGHT: WHAT IS CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRIES UP TO?

WYATT THORNTON '26
STAFF WRITER

The Hampden Sydney College and Longwood University joint Catholic Campus Ministries (CCM) has been in full swing these past two semesters. CCM serves both of the schools and acts as a group where Catholic students can meet and get to know one another and learn more about their faith. The group meets every Tuesday night for dinner at the CCM building near downtown Farmville. Additionally, CCM goes on various retreats and participates in different service projects and other related events. Recently the group

went to Summit, a conference held every year by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. At Summit, Catholic youth groups from all over the state meet to participate in Mass with the bishop, engage in fellowship with one another, and more. Aside from the big events like Summit, Tuesday night dinners routinely attract many Catholic students and guests alike. At a typical Tuesday night dinner, food will be provided either by CCM or be provided by a local Catholic parishioner. Then there is usually a speaker who will give a talk about a Catholic subject. This Tuesday the 14th, for example, saw a speaker give a brief

talk about Catholic social teaching. CCM, like other clubs, also has a leadership team. This year Cooper Boyles '23 is serving as the president of CCM for Hampden Sydney. He has been attending CCM since his freshman year and says that it has given him “a sense of community.” As president of CCM, Mr. Boyles helps to “maintain overall spiritual community” of the club. He serves a mostly administrative role, ensuring that fellow CCM officers are performing their responsibilities correctly, making sure that CCM events happen and that if they don’t that club members

Continue reading on page 5

How Did We Do?: HSC Basketball



MICHAEL MISCIKOWSKI '26
STAFF WRITER

The Hampden-Sydney basketball team finished the 2022-2023 season with an impressive 22 wins. This extraordinary achievement was not achieved overnight and is instead the product of years of hard work. Only through the work of the dedicated players, coaches, and other mentors was this victory possible.

The events that led up to this incredible season were set in motion in 2020 when Head Coach Kimbrough wanted to set the team on a path to greatness. Coach Kimbrough met with Dave Wilson '63, Hampden-Sydney alumni, and former basketball player, to create a plan on how to take the basketball team to the next level. Dave Wilson was instrumental in the creation of the Hampden-Sydney Affinity Groups such as the Grid Iron Club for football and the Roundball club for basketball. These affinity groups would help to build interest in the sports games and raise funds for the teams. With basketball being his sport Dave Wilson

was more than happy to aid in creating an even stronger basketball team.

Head Coach Kimbrough, the assistant coaches, Dave Wilson, and the players on the team all collaborated to create a plan to improve as a team. What came out of this joint effort would be a vision, a mission, a set of shared values, and a performance standard for the team. With these components created the basketball staff, mentors, and players sought to create a culture around these values.

For three years this culture has become engrained in the basketball team and has created a unique environment that coincides with the values of the college. With this culture comes the benefits of discipline, dedication, and accountability for all on the basketball team. Head Coach Kimbrough stated that “(there is) shared accountability across the board” for all those on the team. By allowing the players to check and lead themselves the team can move forward cohesively and work together efficiently.

Another benefit of this culture that was created three years ago is that the freshmen and sophomore players that joined in 2019 and 2020 have had time to fully absorb the values and spirit of the team. In the time since they joined those freshmen and sophomores have become upperclassmen that fully embrace the basketball team. It is the job of the upperclassmen players to lead the team in conjunction with the coaches and pass on the values and spirit of the team to the new players. In this way, when the upperclassmen graduate, they will leave a legacy behind that continues to endure and improve.

That’s not to say that the team hasn’t hit its rough patches over the last few years. The team has kept moving through the pandemic which put the world on hold, deaths in some of the player’s families, and a variety of other challenges. Just like any good team; however, it overcame the challenges and came out all the stronger. Assistant coach Bryson said, “[everyone is] trying

Continue reading on page 6

DR. PAUL HAY GIVES RESEARCH PRESENTATION

JEB TUCKER '26
STAFF WRITER

At 5:30 p.m. on February 27th, faculty and students alike gathered on the fourth floor of Bortz Library to see a presentation from Dr. Hay on his research concerning the *saeculum*. His book—intuitively titled *Saeculum: Defining Historical Eras in Ancient Roman Thought*—will be available for purchase online in August. Dr. Hay opened by presenting an initial differentiation between history judged by time and history judged by events. Our instinctual tendency to organize time periods by

characteristics can skew our perspective of how ancient people viewed the world around them. There are many ways in which ancient people viewed the world and time, and the *saeculum* hasn’t received much attention. “This is an unaddressed question,” says Dr. Hay, “And I guess I’d like to be the guy to address it.”

“As a concept and a word, [saeculum] shows up in a lot of disparate places,” says Dr. Hay. The term has frequented political rhetoric, poetry, religious ideas, and more. Over the course of his presentation, Dr. Hay detailed the journey of the concept from

its origin with the Ancient Etruscans to its eventual fate as a rhetorical tool in Rome. His talk wasn’t a decisive history of the *saeculum*’s influence, though: “There’s a *saeculum*-sized hole in our understanding,” says Dr. Hay, and he thinks he’s found the perfect fit.

Specifically, Dr. Hay’s research shows how the Romans turned the *saeculum* from an Etruscan measure of time into a distinct, personality-driven age of something; the age of Augustine, the self-declared *saeculum* of Sulla, and the struggles to be the defining char-

Continue reading on page 6



HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOHANN SEBASTIAN!

Join pianist James Kidd’s recital honoring Bach

Partita no. 2 in C minor
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All are welcome, even non-Bach-lovers.



Friday, March 31, 11:30 a.m.

College Church

Explanatory note: I take out this ad because Dean McDermott blocked my recital listing from the college public events calendar. His justification was “not a college-sanctioned event.” (Don’t consider law school if you find that compelling.) I suspect the real reason is my lingering status as persona non grata in some quarters. Brief backstory: former Dean Hollemon’s accusation, in writing, of my being a “homophobe” and “hypocrite” had the sanction of the dean and president plus two members of the fine arts department. I was fired as glee club accompanist. As a virtue signal to certain members of the community, the fine arts department resolutely refuses to sponsor my recitals since that time. No appeal possible, a grievance blocked, no explanation, no retraction, and no apology for this personal attack and its aftermath. I assume that all involved feel shame and embarrassment, wanting memory of the sorry episode to simply go away. Hence, my theory of the real reason for the dean’s decision.

OPINION

ON THE RESIGNATION OF ROB IRONS

KADE MINTON '25
STAFF WRITER
AND
DAVID CREGO '23
COPY EDITOR

On February 18, 2023, Dr. Rob Irons '00 resigned from Hampden-Sydney. His resignation came during the middle of the semester, which prompted us to attempt to discover what caused Irons to resign from the college. Given the longevity and scope of Irons' career at Hampden-Sydney, we could not possibly begin to comprehend his resignation without learning about his impact on the College. Irons taught as a Professor of Classics for nine years. He instructed Greek and Latin, and he was awarded the Cabell Teaching Award in 2019 for his excellent teaching abilities. On top of doing what was required of him, Dr. Irons was actively involved around campus and with students. He taught a variety of uncompensated credit hours, worked

closely with Admissions, and served as the club advisor for several student organizations. But of course, these are behaviors that any quality professor may demonstrate. From talking to alumni, current students, and faculty, we found that it was his character that set Irons apart. A student told us that Irons had an "engaging and approachable personality that displayed genuine care." Another student said, "Dr. Irons not only made me strive to be better at Greek, but he also made me strive to be a better man." Multiple faculty members referred to Dr. Irons as a "honest friend," "light-hearted associate," and "just a good guy." One faculty member said, "I will miss him greatly. He was a dedicated teacher and friend and an immense personality on campus. I doubt the College will be able to find anyone else like him." After learning about Irons's seemingly great

personality and career, we were baffled. What prompted him to leave? It is not a well-kept secret that Irons experienced conflict with several of his colleagues and some within the administration of the College. Our initial plan for this article was to lay out as much information about Irons' and the College's side of the story to give a better understanding of this whole debacle. Unfortunately, our emails requesting comment from Dr. Janice Siegel, Chair of the Classics department, and Dr. McDermott, Dean of Faculty, were not answered. The College's official statement, released by Gordon Neal '09, states:



Photo courtesy of hsc.edu

Given the confidential nature of personnel matters and out of respect for Dr. Irons' privacy, the College will not be commenting on this matter other than to say that we were saddened by Dr. Irons' decision to resign from the College and dis-appointed that this decision was made in the middle of the spring semester. We are grateful for his years of service to his alma mater and our students, and we wish him only the best as he begins the next chapter of his professional life. The nature of Irons's resignation is mostly confidential, and some information that we have received cannot be expressed due to legal concerns. How-

ever, we can say that Irons was experiencing a great deal of stress outside of the classroom. A few faculty members even witnessed Dr. Irons have anxiety attacks: "While I don't know the full details of his resignation, I know Dr. Irons has been dealing with stress at H-SC for years, and I've seen it debilitate him. Leaving may be the best way for him to deal with this." Overall, we are saddened to see silence from Siegel and McDermott as they could have helped a lot with dispelling any misconceptions about this whole affair. Instead, with the dearth of information that we have (and the limited information that we can share), this article expresses concern with both the College and Administrations. Irons is an alumnus of this college, so his resignation represents a true loss, hampering the environment of sound learning that we enjoy here at Hampden-Sydney. To end, we leave

you with this statement from Irons after his resignation: No community can function fully without adherence to shared values. Among these values, principles of human dignity and respect are of paramount importance, and there are both college policies and federal laws in place to protect against mistreatment. I strongly believe that, if and when fundamental principles and values are violated, and violated repeatedly and without correction, then all hope is lost. I am and will remain infinitely grateful for the many years in which I was fortunate enough to live and learn along with so many wonderful students and excellent colleagues. I sincerely apologize to anyone who has written to me without response at my HSC email account; I was locked out of my email account very shortly after resigning.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE RPE: ADVICE AND OPINION

TAYLOR MCGEE '23
OPINION EDITOR

ADVICE:

This semester, I had the opportunity to sit in during the Rhetoric Proficiency Exam grading seminar led by Dr. Schooling. As the exam looms higher in the consciousness of those who have yet to pass, I wanted to take some time to give y'all a little advice about what to do from the perspective of a student who knows what the graders are looking for. 1) **Write a thesis.** I know this sounds simple, but I cannot tell you how many of the practice essays we read that simply did not have a thesis statement. Even though the exam is now submitted digitally, I strongly recommend that you write a clear thesis statement on a piece of scrap paper and keep that beside you, constantly referencing it as you write your essay. The hardest essays to pass were the ones that clearly understood the point of the source itself but had nothing to say about the source. Before you start writing, I strongly recommend you sit

and think to yourself about whether the author of your source would agree or disagree with what you have to say. If the author cannot do either, you might want to reconsider your thesis. 2) **Give a clear argument.** This one also sounds simple, but the vast majority of the essays that did not end up passing failed because they didn't actually argue something. Simply putting true facts down on the page is not enough to pass! You have to take a position and argue for it!! Before you start, make sure that the thesis that you wrote down on that scrap piece of paper actually constitutes an argument. Ask yourself: "Could someone disagree with what I'm saying?" There is a difference between saying things that are true and making an argument. One of the biggest problems that caused essays to fail was that the graders had no idea what the writer was going to say next, i.e., the arguments given were

not clear. While you should never strive to be formulaic and boring in your writing, one of the most important things for you to do is to ensure that somebody can at least understand why you said the things that you said after reading the sentence. The water in Pauley is significantly more palatable than the water in Gilmer. When you reader doesn't understand why you said the things you said, even if the things you said are correct, then it is difficult for the reader to understand what you are saying (see above as evidence of my point). 3) **Acknowledge the prompts.** Generally speaking, you should respond to a single prompt and do so in its entirety. When you write your thesis and have ensured that someone could disagree with you, make sure that the thesis you've written actually answers (or at least addresses) the prompts. You might not really like the prompts, but generally speaking,

Continue reading on page 6

OPINION: CONTEXT IS KING

American Standard English (ASE) is nobody's first language. In most instances, demanding that someone talks and writes in ASE is inappropriate and overly burdensome. The stipulation that one should never end sentences with a proposition is arbitrary, taken from a language with a radically different sentence structure and does not significantly improve interpersonal communication. However, there are instances where expecting someone to write in ASE can be useful. Having coherent and prescriptive rules that set standards for grammar and style can in some contexts be exceptionally helpful. From legal documents to academic papers, there are many instances where a lack of clarity introduced by a stylistic or grammatical error can cause significant problems today and for our posterity. The precedents set by these documents can absolutely be disrupted by a lack of clarity in the orig-

inal texts. The inclusion of a comma, for example, can absolutely change the meaning of a phrase. A classic and hilarious example is "Let's eat Grandma" vs. "Let's eat, Grandma." This example, while benign, stands as a clear instance demonstrating that the lack of a comma can cause confusion. Such a confusion in a scientific procedure, for example, could cause a procedure to fail (potentially explosively, depending on the reagents and the context). The ability to write clearly in ASE is, inarguably, a skill that is valuable for students to learn. To be clear, my claim here is descriptive not normative. It is the case that ASE is valuable. There are arguments, compelling or otherwise, to suggest that society should move away from considering ASE valuable. That is not a problem I want to address. Descriptively, it is useful to be able to write in ASE. I think the RPE should be more strict about whether or not students write in ASE. Dr.

Schooling, who ran the RPE training session said repeatedly and clearly that grammar was the lowest of the concerns for grading the RPE. The general consensus was that so long as there were not glaring grammatical errors, the essay should not be punished for violations of grammatical norms. On the other hand, the factors that are most important for passing the RPE are related to the argument and organization of ideas. Allow me to be clear—the ability to arrange one's thoughts into a coherent and defensible argument under a time crunch is invaluable, and I do not want to claim that the RPE should have less focus on argument. A kneejerk reaction to my proposal will be that by increasing the focus on grammar, we have to decrease the focus on argument. As anyone who passed the RPE should know, that reaction, while understandable, is clearly a false dilemma.

Continue reading on page 6

THE PEANUT GALLERY

TIGER TALES

JONATHAN COLEMAN '26
STAFF WRITER

The beast towered over him, standing at least ten feet tall. It looked like something cooked up in a mad scientist’s laboratory: a menagerie of different creatures combined into one. Its head was an alligator’s, its body that of an ancient, extinct T-Rex. It was covered in spikes from its neck down to the end of its tail, and a pair of leathery batlike wings sprouted from its back. It raised its snout to sniff the air, then locked its beady red eyes on Grimm. The detective could sense that running was not an option

here. He had no idea what this beast was capable of, but he could tell that it had only one thing on its mind: kill. Grimm backed away slowly, but the beast advanced, always keeping him in its sights. As he backed up, Grimm again tripped over the teenager’s body, hitting his head hard on one of the wooden beams he had cleared away mere minutes ago. He lay dazed on the ground, not even bothering to get up. As he lay unmoving, the world spinning around him, two things came sharply into focus. One was the beast, readying itself to devour him, the other was the strange, ever-chang-

Photo courtesy of Wokimedia Commons



ing shapes flitting around him like ghostly red specters, ghouls, or demons. As the ringing in his ears began to fade, he could hear them whispering in quiet, almost inaudible voices. *You have meddled in what was meant to remain untouched, they said. Now there are consequences that must be faced.* Every second

the ghosts dared to move a little closer. Grimm could feel his entire body break out in goosebumps. One specter moved up close to his face, and he could make out the vague shape of a teenage boy, not unlike the body lying nearby, before it returned to its original, shapeless form. Grimm was almost certain that he heard it say *I’m sorry*. Then

the spirits converged on him, each one disappearing as it came into contact with his skin. Grimm could feel his body convulsing, then slowly falling limp, all its energy expended in that single moment. He could see the beast still standing nearby, stomping on the mirror and crushing it before raising its head to roar and

blast fire skyward. Grimm could now understand what the demons had been telling him, what he had known since he first found the beast’s footprint. Something supernatural, almost hellish, was going on amid the wreckage of the museum. Mankind had no business meddling in the affairs of the other side, and yet, for reasons Grimm probably would never know, it had. Now he, who knew how many generations later, was paying the price. His last thought before his eyes closed permanently was not a poetic one. *Well, crap.*

JOHN C. HAYNES '26
STAFF WRITER

Kevin McCarthy must have awoken on the morning of January 5th with some sense of relief. After months of having to deal with the rabble-rousers on the populist right, he finally had a deal where he could have the position he always wanted. Sure, he had to make concessions, including some that could allow the Freedom Caucus to dispose of him in a moment, but it was worth it to keep consolidated control over the party. What McCarthy didn’t expect was the challenge to return. At noon, upon the reconvening of congress, Dan Bishop of North Carolina, a traditionally neoconservative Republican, once again nominated Donalds. After three more rounds of voting, McCarthy had not gained a single vote. By eight in the evening, McCarthy had failed to achieve the nomination over the course of 11 ballots, the longest voting period since 1860,

an election that immediately preceded the Civil War. On January 6th 2023, a full two years after the capitol insurrection, Kevin McCarthy signed a deal with the devil to escape his hell. The most notable concession being the refusal to raise the debt ceiling, risking a debt default for the United States. McCarthy had signed away a substantial amount of his power, giving the Freedom Caucus not only the ability to at any moment call a vote to remove the speaker, but also giving populist Republicans substantial swing on the rules committee. This meant that the Freedom Caucus had an overrepresented influence on the Republican agenda. If Matt Gaetz really wanted it, there could be an impeachment vote on Joe Biden every day. Even if he was chosen as speaker, Kevin McCarthy had signed his soul away, and the Devil always collects its due. That afternoon, while I read

The Rum Diary on a beach in paradise, photos of Kevin McCarthy laughing to himself circulated on the internet. The man seemed to be almost suffering from a mental break. He had just lost his 13th ballot, though cracks were forming in the walls of the opposition. Already, fourteen of the dissenters had switched their votes to him, but those last six, which included names such as Andy Biggs, Matt Gaetz, Laruen Boebert, and Bob Good, were stubborn. At this point, even after all the concessions, signing away his life to a group called the “Freedom Caucus,” he must have felt as if God himself were playing a sick joke. All the effort in his life was being taken from him by a handful of radical opportunists. Congressman Richard Hudson of North Carolina being physically restrained from attacking Gaetz. This came after a brief argument between the two. Gaetz continued to refuse to back down.

After the 14th ballot, the Republicans called for a motion to adjourn, however, Majorie Taylor Greene, one of the few Freedom Caucus members to support McCarthy, pulled out her Trump card, a phone call from President Trump himself. Trump actively urged the four remaining holdouts to vote present, in order to let McCarthy reach the threshold to become speaker. Reluctantly, knowing that they lacked the support for a compromise candidate, the four holdouts agreed. At 12:37 A.M., the morning of January 7th, it was announced that Kevin McCarthy would finally become the Speaker of the House. Voting had gone on for four days and fifteen rounds of ballots were cast. I learned we had a speaker when I woke up the next morning. Viewing the sun rising over the Caribbean waters, I pondered the future of the country from sea to shining sea. We finally had a sitting congress, two

more years of the American political process. However, would the power of the Freedom Caucus lead to a state of chaos? Could the American government function if a group of radicals had the power to set the agenda? Are we in for two years of stalling? With the debt ceiling breach imminent, I knew that aggressive action would have to be done to avoid a financial crisis. But, with McCarthy in the firm grip of Bob Good, and by extension, the balls of the American government, was there anything that could be done? The American taxpayer is now at the mercy of a group dedicated to pure culture war, without any regard for policy. Are we prepared for that future?

CCM, CONT'D

are made aware of such changes, and in helping organize events with other Chrisitan groups on campus such as Cogito and Chi Alpha. Mr. Boyles says that attending CCM is good for people. “Even if you aren’t Catholic” he says “you’ll just become a better person...it’s a good...godly environment...a good moral environment to hang out with people, have conversations about your faith.” Mr. Boyles added that Catholic students should attend CCM as he firmly believes that doing so will make them better Catholics. Mr. Boyles mentioned that CCM offers other events, such as reading groups, that include participants who aren’t Catholic. CCM also helps to serve the faith needs of its members. Every Wednesday at the CCM building there is mass followed by confession, providing students with a good mid-

Continue reading on page 6

SAMUEL ROBELEN '23
CARTOONIST

Cartoon



STUDENT SENATE CHAIR (AND NOTED CAESAR ENTHUSIAST) NOAH MOORE CLEVERLY RESIGNS ONE DAY BEFORE THE IDES OF MARCH. NO ONE CARES

THE BACK PAGE

BASKETBALL, CONT'D

to be the best we can be for the program.” Nearly three years of preparation have led to one of the best seasons for the Hampden-Sydney basketball team. It has also led to a legacy that will endure in the coming years for the team. This legacy will train the incoming recruits on the team and ensure that they embrace the culture that has been implemented. This has all been done to achieve the shared dream of Head Coach Kimbrough, Dave Wilson, the basketball staff, and the players to become the standard of excellence in division three basketball.

RPE, CONT'D

ADVICE

it is a terrible idea to just write about things that interest you if you cannot relate them back to the prompts. This one sounds super simple, but I cannot tell you the number of essays that struggled to get off the ground because they did not really address the prompts at all. I strongly recommend you take a second once you have your thesis and ask yourself “which of the prompts does my thesis support to answer?”

4) **Don't be scared!** Nobody is out to fail you! When we saw essays that we failed, the attitude in the room was pretty negative. The professors grading your essays have no idea who you are, but they want you to succeed! Professors want to give you as many points as they possibly can, so help them out!

OPINION

ma. Changing how the RPE is graded need not be a zero-sum game. We ought to maintain the rigor with which RPEs are graded with respect to argumentative content, while also increasing the rigor used to evaluate their form and grammar. Nearly every admissions event I have been on has talked about how H-SC ensures that each of our students learn how to write well (often insinuating or explicitly referencing ASE). Why? Well, because students (and more likely parents) recognize that learning to clearly communicate in ASE is an invaluable tool that will serve them well after graduating.

CCM, CONT'D

week opportunity to participate in their faith. Students also help each other get to mass on Sundays by carpooling. CCM is led by a campus minister, Mr. Dan Holland. Mr. Holland recently took over the role last year. In addition, the club receives its spiritual needs from

two priests, Father Paul and Father Tochi, who both serve at Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Farmville. Father Tochi was installed last year as the parish priest of Saint Theresa by Bishop Barry, the bishop of the Diocese of Richmond.

acter of an era are all derived from the *saeculum*. “I think it’s important to interrogate the intellectual frameworks that we often take for granted,” says Dr. Hay. History is more than its big events; history is in day-to-day life and human experience. “People in the Au-

HAY, CONT'D

gustine Age didn’t know they were in the Augustine Age,” Dr. Hay explains. The super-imposed stretches of periodical ownership that we enjoy today build a useful historical narrative but detracts from our ability to understand the perspective of the people that we study.

Dr. Hay’s talk served to illuminate an area under-scrutinized by many classicists to those familiar with the field and to give a fast tour of social history through the lens of *saeculum* to those unfamiliar with classics. The book itself is a continuation of his dis-

sertation and will be published by the University of Texas Press in 2023. The *saeculum* is a niche but prominent feature in ancient rhetoric and time, and H-SC is now more aware of it thanks to Dr. Hay.

NO BETTER OPTION: A CASE FOR BIDEN, PART 1

JOHN C. HAYNES '26
STAFF WRITER

Joe Biden is not a popular President; an average walk across the campus of Hampden-Sydney or drive through the outskirts of Prince Edward County will tell you that. I am not here to pin blame on Joe Biden for woes of the past two years, nor will I attempt to vindicate him; however, no matter the true cause, it is a fact that the President receives credit or blame for the state of the economy. As inflation worsens, and as the state of the economy seems to worsen in the eyes of the average voter, the blame goes to the top. Movements such as ‘Let’s Go Brandon’ have made themselves incredibly loud in populist politics, with events such as the ‘Freedom Convoy’ resembling the Tea Party protests of 2010. Despite Biden’s unpopularity, the Democrats overperformed in the 2022 midterm elections and have continued to have electoral success. Whether the public likes it or not, Joe Biden might be the Democrat’s best chance at a presidential victory in 2024.

For a period in early 2021, there was a time where I believed Joe Biden to be at the top of the world. For the first time in a decade, the Democratic Party had control over all three branches of government. Obviously, Joe Biden sought to wield this power to get his agenda passed. By April, the Democratic congress had already passed his American Rescue Plan, which dedicated nearly two trillion dollars for fighting coronavirus and its ramifications. This was all part of Biden’s grand ‘Build Back Better’ agenda, which

sought to make the largest public investment into the American economy since LBJ’s Great Society. On April 28th, Biden delivered a speech to a joint session of congress outlining his proposed agenda, with the overwhelming majority of those who watched the speech feeling optimistic in the aftermath. Even I, who typically views politics through a lens of deserved cynicism, was impressed by the performance of the otherwise milquetoast President. However, the ceiling soon fell in on the President, as his political fortunes turned. By July of 2021, the average price for a gallon of gas had risen to over three dollars, the most expensive it had been since the Great Recession. Inflation was on the rise, and people were blaming the Biden Administration. The cherry on top of this fecal sundae fell into place on August 15th, when the Taliban overwhelmed Afghani forces in Kabul, leading to the most impactful U.S. military defeat since Vietnam. After this culmination of events, Joe Biden’s political fortunes seemed all but destroyed, as the American public saw him as responsible for the worsening state of the union. In July of 2022, a year after gas prices reached three dollars a gallon, Biden’s approval rating hit a low of 37.5%. Democrats, myself included, were ready to bail on the President. However, in the month prior, things seemed to turn around for the President. Electorally, Biden was given a miracle on a silver platter that June: the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson’s Women’s*

Health Organization. While the Supreme Court may act independently of electoral politics, the decisions of the Supreme Court can nonetheless influence electoral politics. In this particular case, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which protected abortion on a federal level. As the Republican Party maintained an anti-abortion plank in their platform, this decision would electorally benefit Democrats. The Republican Party was placed on the defensive against an unpopular incumbent. In July, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced that Democrats had finally reached a deal on Build Back Better, now known as the Inflation Reduction Act, which would go on to be signed by President Biden in August. To my shock, as Biden’s opposition was put on the back foot and his legislative success returned, the President’s approval rating climbed. On November 8th, 2022, I sat down with the editor of this paper, Mr. Daniel Nivens, to watch the returns of the midterm elections. Nivens, my GOP counterpart, was prepared to watch the map fill red, as Republicans would sweep elections they would otherwise have no business winning. Unfortunately for my dear friend, this did not end up happening. It took days for the public to learn that the Republicans won the House majority by a mere nine seats. Even more shocking, the Democrats gained a seat in the United States Senate. That night, a realization swept upon me; perhaps Joe Biden was not as electorally weak as I, or any other political analyst expect-

ed. Biden’s Democratic Party, despite the worst inflation since the 1970s, had managed to expand their congressional majority. The last time a congressional majority grew was with the Republicans in 2002, in the aftermath of 9/11. Was there something I missed about President Biden? Over the course of time, it dawned on me that the electoral success of Joe Biden occurs not due to Biden directly but often in spite of him. Biden himself is seen as a rather milquetoast figure. He is an old man, old enough that he often comes off as senile, and represents no aggressive faction of modern politics. From the sense of profile, Biden is what the Democrats have long sought, somebody that personally cannot offend. At the same time, Biden has shown the ability to achieve progressive legislative goals, while not popular, from the perspective of a voter, he is legislatively popular. This has resulted in many of the attacks against the Democratic Party being against the cultural consequences of progressivism, i.e. critical race theory or transgenderism, rather than against any achievement of Biden. To the right, Biden is often not seen as the source of America’s problems but rather as a consequence. He represents a branch of the Democratic elite, but he is not the face of American liberalism like Hillary Clinton was.